

## NOTES FOLLOWING NEW MEMBER WORKSHOP 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017

### Introduction

Run by Mick Stirrup, who outlined the objectives for new members that the Committee had set; why they set them. Although there had been an upturn in members (and buzz) recently, these objectives were still valid. Important to remember that retaining members is also key!

Workshop objectives and process were then outlined. Focus would be on attracting new members, but there was recognition that we would dip into areas which were the province of other groups (website/new runner transition/Club Night) especially when we talked about retaining them.

As for process:

- We would have to stop thinking like existing Club members and put ourselves in the mind set of those we want to attract.
- We'd then brainstorm all different types of prospective new member into 'segments'.
- Next step would be to group all those segments into a more manageable number (no more than 4 or 5) prioritising those most likely to deliver our objectives
- Then we'd develop a set of attributes that we could offer each segment that they would find attractive (proposition)
- How would we then communicate our proposition?
- What important steps do we need to take to ensure if they join, they stay?

This would normally take a day in a work situation, and we spent 75 minutes on the task, so results should be judged accordingly.

### Segments

The Group managed to brainstorm over 40 prospective new member 'segments'!!!! These have been listed in the order (more or less) that they were given, and using the same words. These have not been grouped (see next section)

Keep fitters	Disability runners	Learn new routes
Keep healthy	Juniors	Sharing runners
Want to run a bit more	Strava people	Cross country experience
Aspire to big runs (e.g. VLM)	Previous members	Want to run longer
Weightlosers	Find out about races	Headphoners
Youngsters (less than 55?)	Park Runners	Triathletes
'I want to feel safe'	Runners from pub to pub!	People with no time to spare
'On my lonesome'	Be an EA Member	I need pushing
Want to run for a team	Cheapskates/Moneysavers	Those run around Thornbury
Bugaboos	New to the area	I want to run faster
Club Phobics	Endurance runners	Fed up same old route
'I just want to run'	'I'm not good enough'	Partner not always free
Scaredy Cats	I need to train	Never run before
Racers	People to cross train with	Don't like run in dark
Training for first ever race	Can't make Thursdays	Did X Country at school
Want to run for a Club	Club too far away	Temporary in Thornbury
Children	Parents of running children	Don't run any more
Members of other sports clubs	Leisure Centre members	St Mary's School gates
Members we never see	Healthscared	Weightwatchers members

## Grouping segments/Prioritising

This was a more difficult process, but in the time available we came up with the following 3 segments

Segment 1 - **New(ish) runners**

Segment 2 - **Racers**

Segment 3 – **Improvers**

We always knew that Segment 1 offers a rich and steady vein of new members and we have more to do to improve the throughput (mostly by helping Craig/Rosina). It would be great if we could attract faster runners, but the way to do this is less clear. Segment 3 offers some recruitment scope as, with a bit of tweaking we can offer this group a lot – provided we can find a way of letting them know!

Dealing with each group in turn:

### New(ish) runners

Are less confident	Need encouragement	Want a buddy
Run shorter distances	Can have had a healthscare	Run with others in same boat
Need to learn how to build up	Want access to coaching	
Often want to lose weight	Want access to running info	
Often just want to get fit	Often making a lifestyle choice	

If we map them against our segments (a very inexact science), we pick up the following, which is surprisingly few of the total! It is however a much focused segment that just needs to get from walk to run.

Keep fitters	Disability runners	Learn new routes
Keep healthy	Juniors	Sharing runners
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Aspire to big runs (e.g. VLM)	Previous members	Want to run longer
Weightlosers	Find out about races	Headphoners
Youngsters (less than 55?)	Park Runners	Triathletes
'I want to feel safe'	Runners from pub to pub!	People with no time to spare
'On my lonesome'	Be an EA Member	I need pushing
Want to run for a team	Cheapskates/Moneysavers	Those run around Thornbury
Bugaboos	New to the area	I want to run faster
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## Racers

We identified the following needs:

Share lifts to races	Able to compete as part of a team	Role models
Member X-country team	Wear a Club vest	
Run Cotswold Way (Team event)	Running with similar/faster runners	
Access to quality races	Share success	
Coaching to improve (schedules)	Efforts sessions	

And their needs map as follows:

Keep fitters	Disability runners	Learn new routes
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Scaredy Cats	I need to train	Never run before
Racers	People to cross train with	Don't like run in dark
Training for first ever race	Can't make Thursdays	Did X Country at school
Want to run for a Club	Parent Club too far away	Temporary in Thornbury
Children	Parents of running children	Don't run any more
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This offers a surprising number of 'needs' of racers, which we can tap into with the help and input of our own fast group. The challenge here seems to be how we actually identify potential new members who fall into this category. A general promotional campaign linked with other segments may be off putting for them – we need to target them specifically.

## Improvers

It was surprising to see how much the Club already has to offer this group, a potentially large group. Rather than discussing their needs, and running out of time, we focused on the areas that the Club needed to address to attract and retain 'Improvers.'

However, before summarising those, this is how they map across segments:

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As the table shows, even though the segment might contain a wide range of abilities, this is a good match to what the Club can offer, without us having to change too much. But we then went on to discuss what we needed to do/change:

- There was discussion about Club Night, especially groups
- There was discussion about how new members are greeted
- There was discussion about promotional activities

Largely for the benefit of the separate groups going forward on the above, here are short summaries:

### Promotional activities

- Need to come up with 'different' ways of drawing the Club's attention to prospective members.
- Workshop attendees who recently joined found out almost by accident.
- Website is not the solution, though it must be improved as the one place where our proposition is set out
- Free wrist bands and 'business cards' were discussed
- Leaflets were poo-pooed
- Flyers and posters are better
- Content must be targeted
- Stands at events
- Thornbury Park Run offers opportunities to promote the Club (inc. Junior)
- Sports Clubs are advertising directly for new members (see Thornbury Voice)
- Facebook/Twitter key

*Of course any changes to Club infrastructure must be in place first.*

## Club Night

- After announcements and warm-up often 20 minutes will have elapsed – could run 3 miles in that time!
- Do we need the announcements (it was felt we do), could they be limited to ‘special stuff’ or done after or on flip chart. People can read the website for ‘normal’ stuff
- Could we do a rolling warm up?
- Is a warm up necessary? Do the fast group warm up?
- Groups tailored to ability desired – but can run as one big Group once a month or so (all wearing Club Shirts)
- Should route be published beforehand?
- Should group leaders/warm up lead be agreed beforehand?
- How about creating a team of Vice-Captains to help Pete – they can be the Group/Warmup leaders (needs to be more than one for each group)
- Group Leaders to wear different colour bibs.
- Pete has introduced variety, which is well received (Jim Williams offer/Strava).

## New Runner Transition/New members on first night

- Much needed slower/shorter run every week at Club Night. Bring back Dorothy! We needn’t nominate someone to lead it, rather have a rota rather like the Tea rota. Every week someone gives up their normal run to take this group out. It can follow the main group then turn back. Leader to wear Club Shirt!
- New members on first night apprehensive. Need to sort this. Put a new entrant desk *outside* club room. Have 2/3 Greeter bibs on desk that any club member can pick up on that night. New members know who to talk to/ we know who the new ones are too. Establish consistent process by developing a sheet (Name/running capabilities/How did you know about us?). Then after filling in sheet, and explaining roughly what goes on pass them to the group leader of the group they are best suited to and pass sheet to announcer so that he/she can be identified and made welcome. Angela has been doing a great job with this, but Angela isn’t always there and if there are a few new joiners she can get swamped. Anyone and everyone should do this.

## Other/Things not covered

1. Ad hoc Facebook runs (care insurance) were proposed
2. Consider moving to ‘2 club nights’ by upgrading Tuesdays. Will pick up those who can’t make Thursdays
3. Think about re-inviting members we never see
4. Always keep variety in mind (pub to pub runs)
5. Very little discussion on social events

**See actions on next sheet.**

## **Key Action Areas (for discussion with Committee)**

### **1. 'Clubbing Together'**

Kevin made a telling point that we are a Club rather a running group. If we are to deliver the improvements we want, that will require extra effort on the part of *all* members. There is too much reliance in the Club on individuals, where they are given responsibility and everyone else backs away. Examples are you with the Walk to Run Group; Pete as Captain; Race Directors; Selina for Social etc. We need to create small teams around these people who all do a little bit (this has happened with the Summer Social), rather than leaving everything to one person. We should make 'Clubbing Together' a Club initiative, as people doing things is the enabler to everything else.

### **2. Not well known**

Despite some excellent coverage recently in the Gazette, the Club does appear to be a bit of a secret organisation. The meeting showed that we are capable of meeting the needs of new members of many types, but they don't know that. The proposed website team needs to be renamed as *a Promotions Team*. The website does need to change and that's where I'd start (it will set out who we are/what we do). But there were some great ideas last night about how we can promote ourselves better to our target 'customers.' I can give most help here. Facebook and Twitter will be key.

### **3. Club Night**

This is central to what we do, and a contentious area. I'd say that we need to be better prepared beforehand; slicker on the night; and multi-groups offered (especially at the slower/shorter end). Variety (which we have seen under Pete) should continue.

### **4. Welcoming new members**

We need to develop a process and a team approach to this, so that anyone can do this. Angela has done a great job, but again there needs to be a team. Again, loads of great ideas here. You said this might be our 'quick win' and be in place to take the end of the new runner sessions, so at next Club night on 21 July.

For me, the fast group and recruiting racers remains a challenge. Not one for now perhaps (though Nick might want to fill up the cross country team) but I'd try to engage with the fast group – though there are racers in the Club who are not fast group that should join – and see what ideas they come up with.